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THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

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Language To Build Understanding

MARGARET SCHLAUCH

The broader functions of language instruction are here set forth with an abundance of illustrations by a distinguished linguist, whose recent book, THE GIFT OF TONGUES, has been gratefully and enthusiastically received by the public and critics alike. Dr. Schlauch is a member of the English department of New York University.

—Editor.

We can begin to talk of victory now with more than faith; with a new hopeful sense of its nearness. As we look ahead through the remaining struggle to peace, it is even now the time to begin to say: "We must understand one another better in the future." Already we know that all modes of the coming peace—economic, political, cultural—should be consecrated to the perfection of understanding among the groups constituting the human race. If we choose the wrong methods and allow a second heritage of greed and hatred to engender war, our species can scarcely be expected to survive in sanity the multiplied horror of its impact.

We must therefore learn to know one another. Anything which stands in the way of that goal must be changed. Let us as participants hope, indeed insist, that the conditions of peace create the basis for that understanding. And before that time let us consider the means we already have of understanding one another despite varying economies, political systems, and cultures.

Language is the great universal instrument of communication. There are many languages spoken on the earth, some of extraordinary difficulty in relation to others. But what one group speaks, another group can learn. The ability to speak *some* language to begin with is all that is needed, and that ability is possessed by all functioning humans in society.

At the moment there is a temporary retreat in the study of languages. Students are returning to the natural sciences and mathematics, which are obviously of incalculable importance for the practical job of winning the war. This is as it should be. But it is not too soon to think

of the language needs of peace. One thing seems sure: we of the United States are going to find it important as never before to approach other nations, speaking other languages, with all the sympathy and respect and eagerness for friendship which we can possibly manifest. We have been too lacking in these qualities in the past. Some months ago Mr. Wendell Willkie justly warned us that if we do not reform in this respect we shall forfeit entirely the "reservoir of good-will" upon which we have been able to draw in the past despite our indifference, and even our contempt, towards other cultures.

The Latin American countries offer a good example. It is clear now how essential for us has been their friendship and collaboration during our struggle against the Axis. If they had gone fascist, as Hitler, Franco and Mussolini were anxious to have them do, they could have made our situation (bad enough after Pearl Harbor) quite desperate. Even so, they have had all too much reason to think of us as brusque and greedy, eager to profit by their cheap labor and natural resources, and quite lacking in the polite amenities and formalities which come naturally to persons speaking Spanish. Our own language is simple, even crude by contrast. It avoids formal expressions like "If the gentlemen will have the goodness to enter. . ." We say abruptly, "Do come in!" This may sound like an insult to Hispanic ears. It would be worth our while for all of us to master the gracious forms of Spanish (or a similar idiom) in the original. In so doing we shall be gaining psychological understanding as well as a new language. And our own use of English may become correspondingly polite when we use it with

someone who does his thinking in a more courtly tongue — Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, or any other.

Understanding our own language is an important step in this preparation. Strange as it may seem, teachers and students of English need to acquire a sense of tolerance towards their native tongue. If they assume that "good grammar," as it is called, is a strict and immutable thing, they will approach the whole matter with unscientific rigidity, which is unjustified in the study of any language, and will prejudice them in approaching remoter idioms like those of Asia and Africa.

All languages are changing all the time, just as cultures and societies change. Declensions are built up and levelled down during the course of centuries; words are compounded out of many parts and then simplified as rapid speech slurs unaccented syllables. Thus the English word *alms* (now innocent of inflexion even for number) was borrowed by way of Latin from the polysyllabic Greek *eleemosyne*. In Greek it had two numbers, with four cases in each of them; now it is felt to be plural only, and for practical purposes it is uninflected for case. At an earlier period of English there was tendency to form lengthy compounds as modern German still does; in those days English likewise had more cases than it has today; nominative, genitive, dative, accusative and instrumental.

For many reasons constructions change also, and what was "good grammar" or good usage of words in one age is outmoded or rejected in another. In King Alfred's time people said "To me there stands awe of him"; but later generations lost the sense of an impersonal verb in *stands*, and so the whole construction was

shifted to the personal one, "I stand in awe of him." Similarly, people formerly said, "I did that, I-self," using *self* as an adjective to modify *I* (repeated for emphasis). Later *self* was felt to be a noun, and *I* was accordingly changed into the possessive, *my*, to modify it. Notice, however, that we have not carried this shift through the *self*-compounds consistently; we say *himself* still, with *him* not shifted to a possessive form at all! For historical reasons it was at one time necessary to say "I crope, I swang, I dove." Just as a child tends to use forms like "I binded" or "I throwed," so adults in past generations shifted to the forms we now use when we say "I crept, I swung, I dived." The same tendency has been at work in both cases: the inclination to shift verbs of a minority pattern—the "strong" verbs—into the pattern of the majority—here, the "weak" conjugation. What is regarded as a childish or vulgar error in one generation may be universally accepted in another.

Changes in the meanings of words are also instructive, showing the close correlation between our speech and our culture. Consider the term *real estate*, for instance, and words associated with it. An estate is considered *real* (an adjective from Latin *res*, a thing) when it exists in the basic form of landed property; a *landlord* is the person who holds title to such property, in a manner which was fundamental to the medieval feudal system. In those times he possessed his land because he owned *homage* (allegiance as the king's *man*, Latin *homo*) to the king and he collected goods and services from *tenants* (holders) in his smaller holdings or *tenements*. If the landlord wished to equip soldiers for a crusade, or incur other extra expenses, he might "*death-pledge*" (French *mort-gager*) his

property. Today these terms of chivalry are used by us moderns in changed senses. Dwellers in twentieth-story apartments pay rent to a *landlord* whom they never see, to whom they owe no personal *homage*, on whose land they never set foot. They are *tenants* or holders of the right to shelter within four walls; if they live in a *tenement* their dwelling is most unlike the parcel of land from which a medieval tenant was supposed to *render* payment (*rent*) in the form of fowl, cheese, honey, feathers, wool and the like.

You can trace back older literal meanings for many other phrases current among us. Those dealing with physiology and medicine reflect an archaic attitude, for instance, when people speak of having an *upset* stomach, *catching* a cold, *throwing off* a malady (as if it were a demon-adversary) and *falling* ill. Examples could be multiplied from many fields of human activity. Language helps us to understand our own past history.

It is futile, then, to expect a permanent form of ideal correctness in our own language or that of any other people. We inherit a complicated linguistic engine, patched and overlaid, which we use as best we can to understand each other, and we pass it on to the next generation to be still further modified. To change the figure: there are no absolute and rigid laws of correctness governing our speech. Time and taste and various prejudices operate to determine when a changed form—like "I crept" or "I throwed"—is to be generally accepted.

Once we have grasped the inescapability of change in language, we can approach problems of style and correctness with a new understanding. Consider, for instance, the matter of dialects. Specialists are accustomed to divide these into two

types, regional and class dialects. As the terms imply, a regional dialect is one limited to a certain geographical area, like Devonshire in England or the New England states in America; a class dialect is one limited to a certain level in society. The two categories overlap, of course. Cockney English is limited to the geographical area of London and is also characteristic of the lower orders of society. We think of it primarily as a class dialect, however. The Scottish dialect of Robert Burns is primarily regional, and only in a secondary sense is it thought of as the language of a class group, the peasantry, consciously adapted to literary expression.

The very terms, class and regional dialect, imply a given norm from which the dialects presumably deviate. The norm is assumed to be some standard literary language, the "correct" speech of the schoolmasters. In practice this assumption is found to be true, of course. Though its limits are not sharply defined, still there is a generally accepted way of speaking the English language which is characteristic of those who stand out as leaders in the world of art, politics (on the higher level) and science. In England this way of speaking is perhaps more exclusive and more sharply defined than here, but we too have standards which we apply and expect to have observed by men and women of achievement. When a politician with pretensions to statecraft makes a public speech marred by provincialisms, violations of present-day grammatical conventions, and lapses from literary good taste, he is felt to be handicapped. He may be able and gifted, but his way of addressing his fellow citizens will be a barrier to the kind of understanding he desires to establish.

In other words, he has run into the problem of snobbishness in language. This exists, and it would be futile for us to deny it. We are judged by all things we do—our gestures, our clothing, all conformations to, or violations of, convention. Language offers the most immediate test of all. A young student rebellious about learning the conventions of grammar may be made to see this, perhaps, by reading of impressive or amusing examples demonstrating the importance of speech. Shaw's *Pygmalion* gives an entertaining case history. Abraham Lincoln is a supreme example of one who learned when and how to use the racy provincial dialect of his early speech, and when to use the impeccable classic speech which was his by right of study and conscious self development.

For there is no inconsistency between a recognition of change and relativity on the one hand, and the acceptance of some kind of standard on the other. A student of language learns that there is nothing sacred about the rules. They change, and so does pronunciation. "He don't" may become a universally accepted form in the near future. Moreover, all dialects of region and of class have histories as long and venerable as that of the standard speech. Regional Scottish is an exalted literary language. Rural peasants often preserve ancient forms elsewhere lost. Cockney has some details of pronunciation closer to Chaucer's than to ours. Modern Yiddish preserves older details from the Middle High Franconian, a German literary dialect from which it developed. Thus a student of language may have profound interest in, and respect for, a form of speech which he himself does not wish to share.

Such a student is aware, too, that there

is nothing intrinsically funny about any mode of talking. If a dialect strikes people as essentially comic, a student looks for the causes of this humorous disdain in the social history of the group represented. When Irish immigration to the United States was at its height, soon after the Civil War, the cheapest labor was performed by both Negroes and Irish. In literature, servants and laborers of both groups frequently appeared as comic characters, and their chief qualification for humor was their way of talking. Even now, when Negroes and Irish are treated with full seriousness in some branches of literature, the tradition of their essential funniness remains in others. Few observers, even among trained linguists, stop to reflect on the sociological roots of this attitude. At best the linguists content themselves with a strictly objective analysis of the class dialects, ignoring social factors of causation. You will find a profound challenge to your human understanding in this situation if you begin to reflect on it analytically.

So much for the tolerance and humanity which may be engendered by a broad historical and sociological approach to language. The classroom teacher may very well ask, however: "How can I use these values when I have the practical problem of teaching grammar in the eighth grade?" I think the answer is implicit in what has just been said. You can treat errors as comprehensible lapses; you can show your tolerant understanding of them, and yet you can show your students the urgent practical reasons for approximating the one particular type of English which—for relative historical reasons, not by miraculous decree—is now associated with leadership in the constructive realms of human endeavor. Youngsters are more apt to respond, I be-

lieve, to the tests of good taste and praiseworthy ambition than to dogmatic statements about rightness and wrongness. The whole problem of levels of discourse is involved, but it is not too complicated to be presented even to young students. They can see that time, place and circumstance can determine which gradation of speech should be used—but one must first have cultivated a fine sense of appropriateness used with conscious choice. Lincoln using humorous dialect stories in a small rural political meeting was showing good taste, as was Lincoln pronouncing the lofty, simple periods of the Gettysburg address; but Lincoln had himself to be aware of the levels of discourse represented before he could make the choice and show the requisite taste.

When students have become aware what their method of speech reveals about themselves, they are on the path to a great social awareness. They know how to plan effects and how to make use of linguistic prejudices. There is danger here as well as valuable power. No one can estimate the power for evil which lies in the use of language, as well as the power for good. The accomplishments of Nazi demagoguery should be a constant reminder of this for us. The screaming of falsehoods in an atmosphere of hysteria, in order to evoke and direct hatred consciously, is a technique all too familiar in our time. The radio multiplies the dangers of such abuse incalculably. It is important, too, to remember that the demagogue who shouts is influencing himself as well as his auditors. He is confirming himself, even convincing himself, in acceptance of a hateful lie which in the beginning he privately may have recognized to be false with cynical clarity.

Language is indeed an instrument capable of distorting human relations and multiplying misunderstanding, just as surely as it can deepen harmonious understanding when purposefully applied to that end. Language itself can not be blamed or praised for either use. It is human actions, often immediately caused by economic factors, which determine both. The solution of abuses lies outside the linguistic territory, and requires more than semantic reform. But disciplined study of language can contribute to the goal of human collaboration for that decent living which is one of the profounder issues of the present war.

The attitude to foreign languages is as important as the attitude toward our own. The two are closely connected. Knowing the historical forces which have shaped our own speech, recognizing elements of change and relativity, understanding the import of class dialects, we can turn to other languages and see the same forces at work. We know that any language is capable of enormous development under proper cultural stimulus. We recognize that any dialect of any language can become the vehicle of exalted thought, when genius uses it under favorable historical circumstances. We know, as Vice-President Wallace has said in his speech on "The Century of the Common Man," that there are no "backward" peoples in the world, if by "backward" is meant

"permanently incapable of advance." Mr. Wallace's words are pertinent here. "From a long-time and fundamental point of view, there are no backward peoples which are lacking in mechanical sense. Russians, Chinese and the Indians both of India and the Americas all learn to read and write and operate their machines just as well as your children and my children." He might have added: they learn also to adapt their language, unconsciously, to the needs of a new technology.

This is an essential matter, because on this issue involving the teachability and the human dignity of other peoples we are in fundamental conflict with the Axis powers. For them, outside peoples are base, perennially inferior, born to servitude. To maintain this, both the Nazi theorists and latterly their Italian imitators have flouted the evidence collected for decades by linguists and anthropologists. The Japanese claim superiority, too, for political purposes. We, on the other hand, adhere to the sound, humane principles of interracial and international collaboration. With victory we shall be able to use language, among other instruments, to apply those principles. It is of supreme importance that we use our great opportunity for the cultivation of fraternal understanding, so that the present explosion of hatred and persecution, now convulsing our planet, shall never be repeated.

The Poet's New Address

KATINKA LOESER

For leaning out last midnight on my sill
I heard the sighs of men, that have no skill
To speak of their distress, no, nor the will!
A voice I know. And I must go.

WILFRED OWEN

Since its founding by Harriet Monroe, POETRY MAGAZINE has been the discoverer and encourager of talented poets in many lands, and particularly in these days of adversity for the literary magazines it has followed its young writers to the remote parts of the earth. POETRY's staff, of which Miss Loeser is a member, knows much of what is happening not only to the personal fortunes but also to the mind and mood of the poet in time of war.

—Editor.

Not more than two years ago, the letters which were directed to *Poetry Magazine* from its contributors had one thing in common: "I enclose a new poem;" "Here are two new poems," or perhaps, only hopefully, "I will send. . . before long." Often the poet spoke of his wife, his children, his recent vacation, the book of poems to be published or the one "just out." If he particularly liked a poem or a group which he had read in a recent issue of the magazine, he enjoyed saying so; if he was especially unenthusiastic about any of them, he was infrequently reticent. Two years ago we all wrote similar letters to our friends, news of what we had been doing, a little about the family here—politely asking how their folks were, too. Yet even then, perhaps tentatively, our words wavered toward that which we cannot now ignore, and that is the thing which coldly asserts itself in

these other letters, those which have been coming from the poets, as twenty-nine years ago they came signed Brooke, Kilmer, Sassoon, many having now a new common line, the plain and eloquent, "Please note my change of address." And we don't call him mister anymore.

To be acquainted with contemporary poetry is, of course, to know the names of the men and women who are writing it and to wonder, from time to time, who, along with their poems, they are. It is not, moreover, necessary to be very familiar with the new poetry to have a simple curiosity about poets in wartime. If, for instance, in the January, 1942, issue of *Poetry* you read John Buxton's poems and did not recognize his name, you would turn to the Notes on Contributors and find these lines:

John Buxton, a young English writer, was taken prisoner while fighting in Norway in May, 1940. The poems in this issue were sent from his ninth German prison camp, where he is living with 1,400 others on a plot of one and a half acres.

Here is a provocative story: the poet in an alien land, prisoner of the enemy, accomplishing his work, through devious ways effecting its utterance in a far country, among people who are only entering the dark and larger territory of the world's sorrow, the young voice even in defeat repeating what it must. . . which sustains us now, with inflexions beyond the now.

On the other hand there are questions about the poets which are neither friendly nor frankly curious. Because of their number and the volume of their reverberations, they cannot be dismissed. Examination, therefore, rouses interesting speculations on their source. They fall generally into two parts: where is our war poetry, and where are the war poets? They are integrated as a mass demand, frequently vituperative, an angry assumption that the poets are accountable whenever it is required of them. To ask during wartime what is happening to the poet is, under these circumstances, an indictment of the questioners, who, unconcerned about his whereabouts and goings-on in days of unwar, must have news of him with specific reference to calamity. The magnitude of the present calamity evokes an astonishing number of these demands. Why this sudden interest? Of various possibilities, we can isolate three of the most probable. First, we have those fierce people who may be said to get "hopping mad" when they "think," as they say they do, that the poets can sit around and write poems while everybody else has to "work for a living." Now, they say, here is a war, which as anybody knows is a theme for great poetry, so let's see what they've done! Second, we have those naive individuals who scarcely imagine that there are "poets" at all, but who seem to believe there are only "poems," to be resorted to in hours of emergency under an index system, under headings such as war, patriotism, death, love, and spring. Third, there are the romantics who conceive a poet as a highly sensitive organism which automatically vibrates in varied degrees depending upon the emotional charge of the occasion, records its vibrations mechanically, and lies inert until the next time. Possibly it is this group

that nourished the fable of Joyce Kilmer's death, that is, that Kilmer, upon receiving his death wound, clasped his arms about the nearest tree, and so died.

Suppose we call upon the poets themselves for an answer. First, where is our war poetry? One who is speaking from the last war and in this one, T. S. Eliot, has this to say in *Common Sense*, October, 1942:

When we ask for "war poetry," we may be asking for one or the other of two different things. We may mean patriotic poetry, that is to say poetry which expresses and stimulates pride in the military virtues of a people. Or we may be asking for poets to write poetry arising out of their experience of war. As for the first, we must consider how very little first-rate poetry of this kind there is in any language—and how little of that has ever been written in the middle of a great war. . . . You cannot understand war—with the kind of understanding needed for writing poetry—or any other great experience while you are in the midst of it; you can only record small immediate observations.

Based upon a full knowledge of the poetry written in the last war, this is certainly relevant to the poems of this war, as they are submitted and published. For the second question, we turn to one of the more important younger poets, C. Day Lewis:

Where are the war poets? the fools inquire.
We were the prophets of a changeable
morning
Who hoped for much but saw the clouds
forewarning:

.....

Spain was a death to us, Munich a mourning.

.....

Yes, we shall fight, but—let them not mistake it—

.....

It's for dear life alone we shall be fighting,
The poet's living space, the love of men. . .

Here then is evidence that not only is

the challenge not to be ignored but that it can be met directly by those for whom it is after all only another phrase from the same uninformed persons who at all times speak most loudly when they have nothing to say.

What difference, if any, is there between poets' attitudes toward the world of thirty years ago and that of this year, with reference to poetry? The first World War began as a glorious song, a frenzied repetition of the beautiful theme "to make the world safe for democracy." The characteristics of that early period might be said to resemble a manic-depressive condition, the rapture of the beginning, and the bitterness, the devastation of the actual experience. Recall the brutality of Sassoon's *The Kiss*:

To these I turn, in these I trust,
Brother Lead and Sister Steel.
To his blind power I make appeal;
I guard her beauty clean from rust.

Sweet sister, grant your soldier this;
That in good fury he may feel
The body where he sets his heel
Quail from your downward darting kiss.

And Wilfred Owen's ultimate cynicism:

Oh, Death was never enemy of ours!
We laughed at him, we leagued with him,
old chum.
No soldier's paid to kick against his powers.
We laughed, knowing that better men
would come,
And greater wars; when each proud fighter
brags
He wars on Death—for Life; not men—
for flags.

Today, hounded by semantics, we are, if at the sacrifice of style, more discriminating in our use of words. We wage war now to make the world safe. . . In its nature it is still largely a defensive war; there is more pattern, more definite de-

sign in that which we fight against than what we fight for. While the design was being made, its final shape was detected by a few, and that is the reason why many poems of the past few years have been concerned with a war which was essentially remote to the majority of people. Particularly during the civil war in Spain did the poets warn of the evil which threatened us, pointing out its universal implications—"Spain was a death to us, Munich a mourning." But the evil spread; the pattern achieved monstrous proportions; now it is with grimness, with resignation but with greater strength that we face the present adversary. In 1937 MacNeice wrote:

Our prerogatives as men
Will be cancelled who knows when;
Still I drink your health before
The gun-butt raps upon the door.

The resolution today is that here is something we must do; we are proud to do it, but along with the pride is something else, something spoken by H. B. Mallalieu in a poem in the October, 1942, issue of *Poetry*:

Nightly this watch wishes my time away,
These hideous hours before a great attack.
What truth or comfort is there for the dead?
Truth has been told. Illusion takes its leave.
Comfort could not soothe our consciences
Who share alike the glory and the shame.

Chaos has claimed us these disturbing years,
Beyond us may be days that close this wound
And feel no pain, living in health and wise.
To history we dedicate our acts today,
Evil or good, that man may mend and live.

That there is little correspondence from the poets of the Continent is entirely credible and due to mechanical factors; still, there is undeniable evidence that the compulsion toward interpretation and communication has not been vitiated or destroyed. As the art of a culture endures

more than any other of its aspects, so does the creative impulse of the individual artist assert itself beyond the good or bad circumstances of his daily life. It is not, fundamentally, the tenuous or delicate thing of reputation; actually it is tough and aggressive, a drive toward life, not the one life but that of the many. An example of this strength is a letter from the young French poet Jean Rivier, who was in active military service until the capitulation of France. From Marseilles he wrote the following letter which appeared in the August, 1942, issue of *Poetry*:

Europe seen from the stratosphere appears, no doubt, with its populations in strife and its huge industry of destruction, like a black cancer on the face of the globe. Apocalypse of a world that dies—to re-emerge, perhaps, from its wrinkled chrysalis, with the dazzling vigor of a new body.

France, *la France glorieuse*, suddenly stupefied after the shocking exodus, knew a period of tragic silence. Belgium also was mute. Then began the odious campaign charging that our literature of between the wars had led us to defeat. But this was quickly dealt with—the young writers spoke. *We have denied nothing* of our spiritual past...

...The time is favorable for poetry, because at this time, in spite of everything France is finding spiritual unity. Many periodicals have disappeared, but some continue.... It is possible to count ten new magazines of poetry which have appeared at one time or another since 1940, and it is indispensable in this letter to mention the vigorous intellectual life of the camps of French prisoners in Germany....

Thus the poets of France continue under stormy skies the spiritual work of countless generations, with young energy and with the simplest courage of all: the courage to be, and freely to affirm their being.

While the people of Great Britain are

not threatened with the primary hazard of having, through defeat, a despised way of living imposed upon them, still, though free, they are as a nation and through proximity much more of the war than we are. By now it has become their daily life, and on the civilian population petals of death fall in the night. Again the potency of the writer's compulsion manifests its inalienable kinship with the fight for life. The following excerpts from a letter recently sent to *Poetry* by Keidrych Rhys, a young Welsh poet, names a few British contemporaries of his who are poets in the war:

Peter Hellings, also 20, a hero of the Swansea blitz, awarded the O.B.E. for his extreme bravery, is abroad with the RAF. So is 2nd Lieut. Alun Lewis who is with the South Wales Borderers, officer in charge armoured fighting vehicles. A. V. Bowen is still in hospital as result of wounds received in France. E. Denyer Cox is a flying officer-instructor in the United States. John Cromer is in Egypt... A. A. Levy is a pilot officer and had an exciting time in the sea outside Gibraltar. Patrick Evans, cadet Tanks. J. F. Hendry is in Intelligence...

And Patrick Evans has this to say:

...America has a special meaning for us over here now. I am not referring to Lease-Lend, although we should probably have been done for before now if we had not had that help. Nor do I mean the presence of the United States troops in our islands, welcome though they be. I am thinking of what I can see going on in front of my eyes... More speed, more democracy; an outlook on life which is simpler, no longer silted-up by those of our traditions which have lost their value... We have now warmed up and woken up, and are going ahead. Our Americanisation is not an imitation but an awakening.

Although many of our American poets are in other countries, they remain close. It does not seem so very long ago that a young unknown writer named Shapiro was being encouraged by the editors of

Poetry who thought his work was "promising." Within a few years, Karl Shapiro has become a significant younger poet. And for the past year his new manuscripts have come from Australia.

Here is a letter from another source, not from the poet himself but from his family. Captain Calvin Ellsworth Chumm's mother writes:

This poem was written during the last days of the siege of Bataan on March 26. When we finally received this letter, it was watersoaked, and later we read that letters reaching this country at that time had been sent from Bataan in March... slipped out by submarine, transferred to a freighter at sea, the freighter was in turn sunk by a torpedo. A destroyer passing the scene found a bag of mail floating and brought it to this country. Our letter was one of those fished from the sea.

Cpl. Saul Gottlieb writes:

Well, look, I enlisted in the army. I'm 19. A kid compared to most of the guys in the army. But when I read them my poems, as I do, in barracks, on bivouacs, they look on me with admiration and love. They are warmed... by the poems; they become a little surer, a little less lonely. They begin to think again of things they had forgotten. They say things no literary critic would think of saying because it is too elementary. But they are just beginning with art, slowly finding their way. They are the people. They are poetry itself...

They are in many different countries; they are doing different jobs, but whatever they are doing, wherever they are,

they find time to send in a poem, perhaps only to send brief word of themselves. To them *Poetry* represents a phase of that life for which they are fighting. Candidate Stephen Stepanchev tells us:

Not long ago I received a letter from —, whose poetry I regard as among the finest being written today, in which she betrayed a feeling of guilt and helplessness at being unable to do something directly for the overthrow of Nazi tyranny and the release of the popular vital force which will bring about the conditions prerequisite to a healthy world culture. I'd like to repeat what I told her in reply. I said that the exercise of the poetic function by those who are able is the best possible contribution to the war effort—for poetry clearly represents one of the values for which we are fighting, the esthetic, whose maintenance is absolutely essential to national and international maturity.

Some of our letters are from George Dillon, the former editor of *Poetry*, now stationed somewhere in Africa. He knows, and the present staff knows, that this magazine must continue, that now more than ever it must be secure at this address. As Peter De Vries says in the October, 1942, issue of *Poetry*:

We do not know what seeds lie in darkness, nor what suns shall draw them forth. We do not know what man, what painter, what thinker, what musician may be next worth hearing, or what poet. We do not know his name or his size, or to what speech he shall be troubled. It is for us to have our lamp trimmed and, like the good patriarch of old, keep our house hospitable, never knowing when we shall entertain an angel.

Books of War and Peace

JOHN T. FREDERICK

Book reviewer for the Chicago SUN, well-known radio commentator on books, former editor of THE MIDLAND, noted literary critic, now lecturer in the Medill School of Journalism of Northwestern University, John T. Frederick is eminently qualified to survey the current output of books on the war and the peace.

—Editor.

As readers we confront a formidable dilemma in these days of war. We feel most urgently the need to read—in order to keep informed, to be helped in our thinking about the great issues of the present and the future, to know and feel something of what is happening to the world. Yet the urgent and rightful demands upon our time, both in our professional work and in special wartime activities, are greater than ever before. Under the necessity of making fewer reading minutes yield greater returns, we desire most earnestly to find the truly important, the stimulating and rewarding, among the hosts of new books.

Books dealing directly with the war, in particular, are legion. A few of them are excellent, many are mediocre, some are bad. One of the most important categories of these books—one in which we all want to do at least a little reading—is that of the "documentary" books, those that permit us to share in the actual experience of the war through firsthand accounts of it. The Council on Books in Wartime, an organization of American publishers, has designated two of these documentary books as "imperatives." These are the famous *They Were Ex-*

pendable, by W. L. White, and *Into the Valley: A Skirmish of the Marines*, by John Hersey. Mr. White's story of a motor torpedo boat squadron in Philippine waters is as stirring as anything the war literature has yet given us. Mr. Hersey's narrative of a few days of the fighting on Guadalcanal is quiet, simple, and wholly convincing of its reality. Both of these books have definite literary merit.

They Were Expendable, though it carries the name of W. L. White, is in large part in the words of the men whose actual combat experience it tells. *Into the Valley* is the work of a newspaper correspondent; but Mr. Hersey is all but unique among the makers of war correspondents' books in having written about the war instead of about himself. The state of a journalist's nerves, his digestive prowess, or what he did not say to a famous diplomat at a state dinner may take entertaining enough reading; but all this hasn't much to do with the war. *Into the Valley* is war itself, a narrative in which the reader becomes a participant in action.

Beside these two books I would place two others of the documentary type. Both of these are books which present the firsthand experience of the writers. Lieutenant-Commander John Morrill of the United States Navy was in command of a small warship, a minesweeper, which was at Cavite for repairs when the Japanese attacked that base. He and his men got their boat to sea and to Manila Bay, and participated in the fighting there. On the eve of the surrender of

Corregidor, Morrill and seventeen men escaped in a thirty-six foot boat. The following June they reached Darwin, Australia. *South of Corregidor* is Lieutenant-Commander Morrill's narrative of this whole experience. It is marked by an accurate feeling for the right word and the right detail, by a clear sense of values both literary and philosophical, and by a notable predilection for writing, about deeds and achievements of others rather than his own. *South from Corregidor* is in the highest sense documentary, and seems likely to be read long after the war is over.

Even more markedly unpretentious and yet highly valuable and appealing is the story told by Lieutenant Juanita Redmond of the Army Nurse Corps in *I Served on Bataan*. Lieutenant Redmond had been in the Philippines almost two years before the war with Japan began. She was one of the nurses designated to establish and conduct a military hospital behind the lines at Bataan. Later she continued her service at Corregidor. She was one of a handful of American nurses chosen to leave Bataan on the last plane before the surrender. Her story, told with extreme simplicity and restraint, is one of the most notable to be found in the war literature thus far.

A documentary book of a different kind is *War is People*, by Lorna Lindsley. This is a correspondent's book; but like *Into the Valley*, it makes us forget the author (except as a keen-eyed and genial companion) while we look at the people, the individual men and women and children, in whose lives Miss Lindsley helps us to read the meaning of war. Miss Lindsley's war did not begin at Pearl Harbor, nor with the invasion of Poland. It began in Spain. The most interesting

part of her book deals with people and events in Spain, and one of the important things in her book is the emphasis on the continuity of the Spanish struggle against fascism and our own struggle now. Also of special interest are the pictures of Palestine in wartime to be found in this book.

Though most of the many books by war correspondents leave little for the reader to ponder, two at least are exceptions in this matter. Colonel Carlos P. Romulo's *I Saw the Fall of the Philippines* is valuable not so much for the story of the fighting on Bataan and Corregidor, which has been better told elsewhere, as for the analysis of political pressures and potentials in the Orient. Colonel Romulo, a Manila editor, received a Pulitzer prize in Journalism for a series of articles on Far Eastern affairs written before Pearl Harbor. His book—besides containing far more of significant first-hand experience of fighting than most of the war books of journalists—affords the reader an extremely candid and sobering view of future possibilities in the Far East. In this aspect it is entitled to a place in the second category of books directly related to the war, that of books dealing with the general issues of the war, both present and future.

Howard K. Smith's *Last Train from Berlin* shares this distinction. For the most part it is a record of observations in Germany during the months immediately preceding the declaration of war with the United States, and as such it is interesting and often enlightening. But in a single chapter Smith abandons the reporter's desk for the editor's—explaining that this is what every reporter always dreams of doing—and writes not about what he has seen and heard but about what he thinks and feels. Most of what Mr. Smith thinks

and feels has to do with things here at home. Not much of it is conducive to mental comfort, but all of it is worthy of mental effort, of careful consideration.

Definitely in this second category are the many books about how to win the war and how to win the peace. Among these are the panaceas of cranks and crackpots, the triumphs of armchair admirals and platform brigadiers. Some of these fail to justify the inroads they make on the nation's paper supply. A few are of definite value.

One of the best of these books about war aims and issues is a relatively old one, James B. Reston's *Prelude to Victory*. Publication of this work in the "Pocket Books" series has now given an opportunity for very wide reading of it, and this is entirely desirable. Mr. Reston's chief concern is with the things we need to do at home, not only to achieve victory but to make victory mean what we all want it to mean. *Prelude to Victory* is clear and forceful in both thinking and writing, and while it is candid and unsparing in its pointing out of national weaknesses and inconsistencies, it is wholly constructive in spirit. It well deserves careful reading.

Two very new books by Chinese writers must be reckoned among the most important contributions to American thinking about the war and the peace. These are *All We Are and All We Have*, by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, and *We Chinese Women*, by Madame Chiang Kai-shek. Both are collections of speeches and writings of the period since the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Their whole effect is both inspiring and arousing. They express both the most noble and elevated idealism and the most practical common sense. No utterances of

any of the leaders of the United Nations are more worthy of the earnest attention of American citizens than these.

Wendell L. Willkie's *One World* shares with the American public the fruits of Mr. Willkie's unique opportunity to discuss the issues of the war, within a single brief period with all of the leaders of the United Nations. The story of his journey around the globe is told concisely but concretely. Often enough he presents a meaningful detail without comment, letting the reader arrive at his own appreciation of its significance. He spares no feelings and respects no false conventions. His book constitutes the most important single effort by an American writer to bring American readers to a clear recognition of the present and future problems which American citizens will have to face and solve.

All the seriousness of most wartime reading should be tempered by enjoyment of the American habit of humorous comment on painful matters. That some hundreds of thousands of American readers have thought so is indicated by the great popularity of *See Here, Private Hargrove*, now, like *Prelude to Victory*, released to the still larger public of the Pocket Books. *See Here, Private Hargrove* has numerous competitors, of which the best is probably *It's a Cinch Private Finch*. Sergeant Ralph Stein has made a series of genuinely amusing drawings for this book, and Sergeant Harry Brown has told in queer George Adeish style the story of Private Finch. Unlike Private Hargrove, Finch isn't a slick boy who gets along. He is the despair of Corporal Crud on the drill ground because of his all but superhuman capacity for doing things wrong. He is funny, and real.

Major Hartzell Spence, Editor of *Yank, the Army Weekly*, contributes a foreword to *It's a Cinch Private Finch*, in which he tells us that the artist and author have been more than half autobiographical in their portrait of Private Finch, "a harried civilian set down in the bewildering regimen of military life to emerge a good, if temporary, soldier. Private Finch is proof, as Stein and Brown are proof, that

our Army makes a soldier of a man without destroying in him the individuality and humor and tolerance that are among the necessities of peaceful democratic society."

There's one comfort for the reader of wartime books, at least. All the best ones are brief. That helps, when minutes for reading are few and hard to find.

Surveying our Soviet Ally

MACKLIN THOMAS

Dr. Thomas, a member of the English department of the Chicago Teachers College, here makes a discriminating selection of books designed to promote a more sympathetic understanding by Americans of the Russian people, so essential to victory in this war for survival and to a durable peace.

—Editor.

Some time before the present war, the American correspondent Ruth Gruber stepped into a classroom in the remote Siberian port of Igarka, above the Arctic Circle. As soon as she was introduced, "a young boy in rough working clothes, frank and eager, spoke out. 'We know about America,' he said a little boastfully, and then went on with admiration, 'we know that you have the best machines and the best factories. We will be glad now to hear of America personally, to know about your country.' . . . Another boy, looking like a mechanic, added, 'Our government recognizes your great aviators.' He paused reverently. 'They gave the Order of Lenin, our highest honor, to two American airplane mechanics who

helped Pilot Levanovsky save the Chelyuskinites.' . . . They wanted friendship—friendship that extended beyond us, beyond that little group in a smoky room in the Arctic, to encompass both our lands. These were no professional propagandists, I was sure of that; no delegates trained to memorize their little speech of welcome."¹

"We know about America. . . ." Until lately few American school children could have returned the compliment. We did not know much about Russia. Information was hard to get, and some of the reports coming out were clearly so prejudiced that we were likely to suspect all of them. But now we know about Stalingrad, about Leningrad and Sevastopol, about the men and women guerillas who fight behind the lines against our savage enemy; and we want to know more. To meet this need a rich crop of books has appeared.

The book that did most to throw a new light on Russia, picturing it freshly

¹ Ruth Gruber, *I Went to the Soviet Arctic*. Simon & Schuster, 1939, p. 84.

through the eyes of a keen observer, was Ambassador Joseph E. Davies' *Mission to Moscow* (Simon & Schuster, 1941). With favored entry to the highest government circles in Moscow, the author was able to give informal portraits of such men as Voroshilov, Molotov, and Stalin in the realistic character of jovial hosts and indefatigable administrators, men in whom he recognized the great executive skill that depends on mastery of detail with the ability to see far ahead. He thinks that in America they would be heads of great production enterprises. To the student of history, perhaps his most interesting revelations are those of the efforts back in 1937 of other great powers to discredit the Soviet Union's appeals for "collective security" and so to lay the basis for Munich—information which, if the world had had it earlier, might conceivably have averted that disaster. Mr. Davies also attended some of the famous treason trials of 1935-38 and was convinced that the prisoners were actually part of a fifth column trying to betray Russia to Germany and Japan. To the end of his book the author remains a champion of capitalism, maintaining that socialism will not work; but he believes that the aims of the Soviet leaders are to serve the common man.

In a special sense it was the Red Army, standing up to the panzers and disappointing the gloomy experts who thought it would fall apart at the first shock, that opened the way for Mr. Davies' book; for the army's wartime performance could only be explained by the facts about the whole country. Behind a great army today there must be a powerful heavy industry—modern war is a battle of machines. Behind such a

heavy industry must stand a great program of education and technical training. Behind any effective use of the combination in battle must exist morale—a people united in purpose and loyalty. To explain the existence of these unsuspected resources a number of surveys of Russian life in its broad outlines have appeared.

The Truth about Soviet Russia, by Sydney and Beatrice Webb (Longmans, Green, 1942), is a small but authoritative handbook by two distinguished British social scientists on the political, economic, and military organization of Soviet life. They feel that the Western democracies can learn something from Soviet methods of establishing racial equality, solving conflicts of nationalities, and planning production for use. The book contains a complete translation of the Soviet Constitution of 1936 and an analysis of its moral and philosophical bases.

Land of the Soviets, by Marguerite Ann Stewart (Institute of Pacific Relations, 1943), is a very useful statistical and descriptive booklet on the Soviet Union, well supplied with maps and photographs.

The Soviet Power, by Hewlett Johnson, Dean of Canterbury Cathedral (International Publishers, 1941), is a broad and sympathetic survey of Soviet institutions from the point of view of a liberal Churchman. The author is especially concerned with the moral results of a system of universal social security—guarantees of employment, child care, education, medical service, equal opportunities for women, etc.—which he believes make possible a practical application of Christian altruism.

The Russians, by Albert Rhys Williams (Harcourt Brace, 1943), covers generally the same material as the books mentioned above but has the added interest of much local color and anecdote—the author has been making trips to Russia since before the Revolution; he knew Lenin, and sprinkles his text with lively stories of old Russian leaders, guerilla fighting in the present war, and so on.

The Red Army itself, its organization, history, and strategic principles, have been the main subject of several recent books. Max Werner, who has the highest standing among current civilian war commentators, devotes much of his book *The Great Offensive* (Viking, 1942) to an analysis of the Russian-German campaigns. He exposes the myth that German High Command communiques are factual by dissecting their claims of numerous "battles of annihilation" which could not have taken place. His explanation of the Russian innovation of defensive-offensive strategy is admirably clear. The last of his book is concerned with United Nations strategy, laying out a plan of coalition warfare against Hitler on the European continent which he believes would in a relatively short time end the western phase of the war.

Capt. Sergei N. Kournakoff's *Russia's Fighting Forces* (Duell, 1942) is the work of a former Czarist officer who fought against the Reds, who has since come to sympathize with the present Russian order. It contains an interesting historical survey of Russian armies and campaigns from the 13th century to the present, giving the reader a vivid condensation of the heroic military tradition which plays a considerable part in modern Russian morale. Especially valuable in Kournakoff's analysis of the 1941-42

campaigns is his taking into account details of terrain, factors of manpower and supply, strategic civilian reserves, etc., which most commentators leave outside the picture.

Stanley J. Marks, in *The Bear that Walks Like a Man* (Dorrance, 1943), shows how the striking power of the Red Army is an expression of the developing life and will of the whole nation. Their planes, guns, tanks, and medical care are better than the Germans'. Their morale is better because, unlike the Nazi automata, they know what they are fighting for. Even in peacetime, the Russian soldier is not cut off from other citizens but shares their educational and cultural life as an equal. He has had on the average 11.5 years of schooling. He has access to army schools, theatres, clubs, and cultural centers. Marks also tells about the amazing transfer and development of armament plants during the war that have compelled Hitler to confess he was "mistaken."

Two books by a Russian war correspondent (since killed in action like so many of his fellow writers) give eyewitness accounts of the long battle. Alexander Poliakov, in *Russians Don't Surrender* (Dutton, 1942), tells how his contingent, encircled by the Germans in the first week of the war, fought its way back to the Russian lines in three weeks of continuous battling. No fiction could pack so much action. With a kind of morale close to cockiness they pushed ahead under artillery and aerial bombardment—burning German supplies as they went, stealing Nazi maps and dispatch cases, bathing in the river under fire, even impersonating German traffic officers at night and misdirecting enemy units. Poliakov was thrice wounded but kept on with the rest.

Poliakov's *White Mammoths* (Dutton, 1943) tells about a 1300-mile train trip from a factory in the Urals to the front lines with a load of the formidable KV heavy tanks. The tankmen sing songs of home and tell of former battles in which they outwitted the hated enemy and freed despoiled villages. The contrast between the humorous kindness of the men and the fury with which they drive their white mammoths against the "child-murderers" is unforgettable. There are many pictures.

In the last two years many top-ranking journalists have been stationed in Russia, and several have written books after their return. Two of the earliest were Erskine Caldwell and Margaret Bourke-White. His *All Out on the Road to Smolensk* (Duell, 1942) and her *Shooting the Russian War* (Simon & Schuster, 1942) give a brisk narrative with fine photographic accompaniment of their stay in Moscow and trip to the Yelnia salient in the fall of 1941. Caldwell gives first-hand observations of the superb air-raid defenses (the Moscow radio stays on the air during raids) and details of army life at the front, such as the problems of putting out a newspaper under fire. Miss Bourke-White's portrait studies of Stalin have been often reprinted.

The British correspondent, Alexander Werth, a former Russian émigré, gives in his *Moscow War Diary* (Knopf, 1942) a picture of life among the correspondents and diplomats in Moscow during the bleak fall of 1941. Werth, a sensitive and somewhat introspective observer, dwells especially on the cultural pursuits of the war capital—its ballet, concerts, literary life, etc. Cultural life in Russia was not overshadowed even in the days of gravest danger, but rather took

on a new intensity. The Muscovites would not let the Germans spoil what they were fighting to maintain.

Anna Louise Strong's *The Soviets Expected It* (Dial, 1942) comes from a richer Russian experience than the work of most correspondents. Miss Strong lived in Russia for many years, was for a time an editor of the English-language *Moscow News*, and consequently fills her book with incidents, conversations, sketches of Soviet personalities, and accounts of exploratory trips in pre-war Russia. She tells how the Soviet people sacrificed their material comforts for years to prepare a military machine to meet the inevitable Fascist attack. Her eye-witness account of the democratic and peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism in the Baltic states during 1939-40 is a unique record of one of the most significant events in modern history.

Quentin Reynolds' *Only the Stars are Neutral* (Random House, 1942) is a breezy and boisterous tale of his sojourn in Moscow and Kuibyshev in the fall of 1941, made up of battles with the censors, struggles for living accommodations, practical jokes on other journalists, and—the high point—attendance at the imposing banquet given by Stalin to the economic missions from America and Britain. Life was not all play—Reynolds shows actually a deep and sympathetic understanding of the Russian sacrifices. A man who gets to know people easily (he calls Churchill by the first name), he recognized in the Russians a people of all the Europeans most like ourselves. He troubled to investigate the observance of religious freedom guaranteed in the Soviet constitution, discussed the question with Father Braun, a Jesuit priest who said mass daily in a Moscow church, and reported that

so far as his own experience went, "There was no anti-religion in Russia. . . I mentally apologized as a Catholic for the things I've thought about Russia's attitude toward religion."

We're in This with Russia, by Wallace Carroll (Houghton Mifflin, 1942) is the most serious, balanced, and thorough study of Russia by a modern correspondent. Carroll, United Press European Correspondent, visited the Soviets after twelve years reporting peace and war in Europe. Can the United States and Russia work together in war and peace? is the question underlying his book and to answer it he visited villages, collective farms, and factories; talked with government officials and army men. His answer is that the two countries cannot help working together. Americans and Russians, he says, have been made alike by history and geography. Both inhabit huge rich lands, similar even to their plains and mountain masses. Both have the optimism and broad humor of pioneering conditions. Neither has anything that the other covets. Russia will have no ambitions after the war but to repair her terrible scars and resume the peaceful development of her vast hinterland, interrupted by the Fascist attack. The two nations working together can become an impregnable bulwark of world peace and progress.

A very similar picture emerges from Wendell L. Willkie's *One World* (Simon & Schuster, 1943). With greater freedom of observation than any ordinary correspondent has enjoyed, Willkie roamed at will and uncondemned through Russian collectives, factories, and cultural centers; talked intimately with Stalin and other high officials. From these and similar experiences in the Near East and China,

he has drawn a powerful argument for our cooperation within the frame of the United Nations with Russia and China in winning the war and in the great job of construction that will follow.

A number of books studying special aspects of Soviet life should be mentioned briefly. Beatrice King's *Changing Man* (Viking, 1937) is a first-hand survey of Soviet educational aims and methods, stressing the unity of school and life in Russian schools with its resultant emphasis on "polytechnization." She tells of the difficulties of bringing an alphabet to primitive Asian peoples who had never before been able to preserve their national epics in writing. Ruth Gruber's *I Went to the Soviet Arctic*, quoted in the beginning, is a charming record of her trip up the Yenisei River and through the Arctic seas with the well-known explorer Papanim (himself author of *Life on an Ice Floe* (Julian Messner, 1939)). Full of humanly interesting interviews and observations, her book shows the romantic rôle the Soviet Far North now plays in Russian life—comparable to the Wild West of our pioneering days—and the major part being taken in this development by women, who make up a great number of the region's administrators and technicians.

Emil Lengyel's *Siberia* (Random House, 1943) is a recent description of that enormous and fabulously rich hinterland whose development fires the imaginations of Soviet young people. The former icy prison of Czardom is fast becoming a great arsenal of oil, metallurgy, and farming. Tomorrow they mean it to be the home of a hundred million new citizens, building a civilization according to plan. Maurice Hindus' *Russia and Japan* (Doubleday Doran, 1942) gives

the reasons for his belief that Japan must of necessity attack Russia before the war is over.

C. J. Crowther's *Soviet Science* (Dutton, 1936) is a survey in great detail by one of England's foremost scientists of the work under way before the war in Russia's state laboratories and experiment stations. Henry E. Sigerist's *Socialized Medicine in the Soviet Union* (Norton, 1937) is an authoritative report on Russia's provisions for free and universal medical care, by the Professor of Medical History of Johns Hopkins University.

Two books by Russian statesmen should be mentioned because they already have historic significance. Maxim Litvinov's *Against Aggression* (International Publishers, 1939) is a collection of his speeches favoring a policy of collective security among the democratic powers against Fascist aggression, delivered to the League of Nations Assembly between 1934 and 1938. Joseph Stalin's *The War of National Liberation* (International Publishers, 1942) is a collection of Stalin's war-time radio addresses,

in which the Russian war aims, sometimes called "enigmatic," are succinctly set forth. Here the often-published Soviet policies of racial equality and national self-determination, with restoration of democratic liberties to the conquered peoples, are restated in the light of existing international agreements.

The time is past, if it ever existed, when violent partisanship either for or against the Soviet Union could be the attitude of intelligent educators. Now that our national survival and our chances of a lasting peace are bound up with the fortunes of the United Nations—now that the Soviet Union emerges as the major power of the Old World just as we are of the New—it will be a necessary task of the schools to report accurately and interpret to each other these two nations which, whatever their differences of means, live by the dream of achieving human equality, and which, according to Vice-President Wallace, can preserve the world or plunge it into chaos according as they work together or apart. To increase this understanding is the object of the authors listed above.

Book Trails Leading South

RACHEL SALISBURY

Dr. Salisbury, who teaches English Education in Milton College, Milton, Wisconsin, is a member of the International Relations Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English, and a foremost advocate of closer relations with our Latin American neighbors. In this article she ably reviews the leading publications in the field which may serve as background for teachers pioneering in the promotion of world-mindedness among the youth.

—Editor.

After this war, the American people will find themselves with a large assortment of new neighbors. Nearest of all are the Latin American countries of Central and South America, of which, until about 1940, we knew practically nothing for two reasons: because of our ignorance of their languages and because of their strong cultural ties with Europe. Now, in the world's greatest flood of human tragedy, we, the countries of the western hemisphere, find ourselves to our mutual astonishment isolated on a great island. To survive we must borrow from each other, we must lend our goods and our ideas and our courage; and we must learn speedily to communicate with each other if we are to be effective in rescuing those separated from us by the blacked-out waters. And we do not know each other!

Travel being what it is today, we must depend for improving our acquaintance largely upon such vicarious means as reading, lectures, exhibits, recordings, radio programs, motion pictures—and more reading. By means of these we can do a great deal; so that when the war ends and we can once more fill up the

family car and try out the new Pan-American Highway, we shall have some idea in advance of what the people of the other republics are like, what they enjoy doing from day to day, what they cook and wear, what they build and ride in, what games they play, what they read, what gods they worship, what they laugh at and what they fight for, what their countries and cities and scenery look like, and what we can be expected to talk about with them. Lacking any idea of these things, how can we expect to qualify as competent classroom teachers or as enlightened citizens in a new America?

Learning to know the Latin Americans will have nothing in it of the dull, the thin, the monotonous. Every chapter of their history is fascinating and romantic. We may think certain parts exasperating or cruel or unjust or ridiculous—but never dull. Having through the centuries laid more stress on spiritual than on material values, our southern neighbors are still young in mind and heart, with a zest for rich and colorful living that has escaped us Anglo-Americans to the north, who have concentrated upon things. In their deep jungles and among the majesty of their mountain peaks, the Latins have sought and found beauty and wisdom.

In these few pages we shall select and attempt to describe several of the "imperatives" among recent books that are useful to the teacher beginning to read in the Latin American field. Our first task is to reduce our own ignorance. For too many of us Cuzco has long been nothing more than one paragraph on

page 72 of the textbook, and the jungle a place where the trees drip snakes. A most sensible first step may well be some popular reading of the survey type, to give us a little mental footing for advanced travel on the trail of Pan-American self-education. Among the travel books there are several that will start us off right.

Travel Books

The teacher just beginning to be curious about Latin America may well begin with *America South*, by Carleton Beals, or with *Inside Latin America* by John Gunther. Both books present clearly written summaries of the history, geography, culture, education, economics, politics, social customs, and significance in the Pan-American scene of the several countries. Beals' book is organized by topics; Gunther's by countries. In each case the information is embedded in running narrative of travel and embellished with conversational incident and exciting detail. Both books have been criticized for minor inaccuracies and biased or incomplete points of view. Yet each remains a good volume for the beginner, who is introduced to his subject with grace and enthusiasm and who can acquire enough basic facts to make subsequent reading intelligible and progressively profitable.

In a class quite by itself is the recently reprinted book *Brazilian Adventure*, by Peter Fleming, a British journalist who accompanied an expedition into the jungle in search of a lost explorer. Mr. Fleming minimizes the dangers and the suffering of the searchers and plays the intellectual philosopher, as he lets his penetrating wit and meaningful satire illuminate the experiences of the party. His sophisticated treatment of experience is illustrated in this paragraph:

"Delay in Brazil is a climate. You live in it. You can't get away from it. There is nothing to be done about it. It should, I think, be a source of pride to the Brazilians that they possess a national characteristic which it is absolutely impossible to ignore. No other people can make this boast. The English are a race of shopkeepers; but it is possible to live in England without being seriously inconvenienced by the process of barter which rages around you. A tendency on the part of the traveler to melancholy or extravagance need not be curbed among the gay and thrifty French. Self-revelation may be practiced among the inscrutable Chinese, and generosity among the Scots. You don't have to be a bigamist to go to Turkey, and a coward can find contentment in plucky little Belgium. But a man in a hurry will be miserable in Brazil. . . . We were six days in Rio, having what is known as Trouble With The Customs."

After three pages of description of his visit to the snake farm at Butantan, in Sao Paulo, in which the author leaves the reader crawling in terrified revulsion before word-pictures of deadly, bright-colored corals and huge, hate-driven rattlers, he dismisses the subject with this one-sentence paragraph: "The whole time I was up in the interior I never saw a snake of any sort." Fleming is a master of style of shrewd observation, of witty satire. The impact of his civilized point of view against the Brazilian jungle makes reading that fortifies one against any hangovers from old wives' tales of disease, suffering and danger in the fabled valley of the Amazon.

About our nearest neighbor, Mexico, there are many excellent volumes. One with a literary quality that teachers will

particularly appreciate is Clifford Gessler's *Pattern of Mexico*. Its scope is not ambitious nor does it "cover everything." It begins with a brief historical account of the country, with less emphasis upon the display of pompous proper names than upon the development of native culture. Against this backdrop the author describes representative sections of present day Mexico, as the traveler sees them. The account is enlivened with portraits of individuals, tales of personal adventure, legends of town and mountain, stories of lost mines, pictures of temple ruins, conversation with the ever-surprising citizens of today, modern problems of food, mixed bloods, political knavery, statesmanship, foreign influence. The book moves then into extraordinarily stimulating comment upon Mexican architecture, sculpture, painted friezes, murals, pottery, lacquer, and weaving. At the end there is a very practical chapter about what to eat and drink in Mexico, what to do about money, language, hotels, baggage—and what the Anglo-American needs to learn about courtesy.

Running through all these chapters is the author's assumption that the Mexicans are fine neighbors. Gessler's lucid, simple style, frequently embroidered with reflections of the beauty around him, must delight Mexican readers, who never in their thinking get far away from the basic affirmation of Earth, its beauty, its resignation, its productivity of essential goodness. E. H. Suydam is the able artist who catches these same things in his delicate sketches, which profusely illustrate the volume.

Histories and Special Treatments

From the surface excursions recommended above, the teacher may wish directly to probe the subsoil, digging into

the books that give solid facts and figures, with historical data organized in formal chronological order, rather than impressionistic sequence. The layman with that sort of taste may well choose *Latin America*, by William L. Schurz. It constitutes a complete sourcebook for all twenty republics and is written in an interesting as well as authoritative manner by a man who spent many years in the countries he writes about. Similar in scope and intent is *Latin America*, by Preston James, with its many fine photographs. Not to be overlooked is William Prescott's imperishable *The Conquest of Mexico*. These will lead to dozens of others that extend the margin of knowledge and increase the degree of appreciation, which must of necessity be based upon understanding.

Biographies

Another good approach to understanding a people is biography, the accounts of heroes, artists, and statesmen whose figures have grown brighter through the years and more secure in the admiration and affection of their people. Detail is thrown into the clear-cut design of destiny as it affects a man and the country he represents. One begins, of course, with a good biography of Simon Bolivar; Emil Ludwig and Elizabeth Waugh have both done effective biographies of this dynamic figure. Just this spring Margaret Harrison has published *Captain of the Andes*, the life of José de San Martín, that other hero who, like Bolivar, renounced wealth and military advancement in Europe to underwrite with his life the cause of democracy in South America. The eventual history of democracy in the western hemisphere will undoubtedly place these two men with our own Washington and Jefferson as the shapers of our American way of life.

Both men of the south are romantic legends as well as historical facts; their lives read like storybooks.

Psychographic biography has found its newest adaptation as a transparent medium for portraying the heart of a nation in Gertrude Diamant's *The Days of Ofelia*. Mexican temperament itself is gracefully drawn in the character sketch of a ten-year-old child who acts as a mirror to her people. The author narrates a series of experiences with the loveable, exasperating, devoted girl who insists upon being maid to the American teacher, and through whose experiences the reader comes to know the Mexican poorer classes—by way of their markets, their churches, their weddings, their guest dinners, their courtships, their day labor, their homes, their food, their plazas, their music, their courts of justice, and their language.

One is constantly aware of the unfailing courtesy of the Mexican, who will answer "Yes" to any question just to please you, and will then proceed to explain all the reasons for "No." Of the little boy who carried her things in the market, the author asked, "Do you live with your parents?" Immediately he said, "Yes. Only they are dead and I live with my little grandmother."

The racial lack of punctuality (certainly not a peculiarly Brazilian trait) is described in incidents that leave you laughing with sympathy and unbelief. Their pride in gadgets, even if they do not work, is unforgettably told in the story of the bus that became "descompuesto." In the case of the German refugees who lived downstairs, the war reaches into Mexican life. There is tragedy when a jilted sweetheart commits suicide; and Justice frowns over an irresponsible

brother. Comedy rides high when the teacher tangles with the red tape of the law, which suddenly suspects her of being a foreign refugee, official American documents notwithstanding. When Ofelia becomes ill, the superstitions of the family rear ugly heads. Incident by incident you feel the loveable humanity of the Mexican and gaze in increasing wonder at his complacent faith in destiny. In *The Days of Ofelia* you ponder the problem from the foreigner's point of view. In Alegria's novel, to be described later, you ponder it from the Indian's point of view. It is important to ponder this problem of destiny.

Recently translated from Spanish is the work of a young Chilean woman, Magdalena Petit, who presents a psychological, strongly realistic study of *La Quintrala*—rich and red-headed, unscrupulous and cruel, beautiful and perverse noblewoman of early Colonial days. This young author's work ranks in care and sensitive portrayal with the biographies of women done by Gina Kaus and Katherine Anthony.

In more familiar vein is the autobiography of Thomas Ybarra, *Young Man of Caracas*. There can be nothing more reflective of the flexible Latin temperament than this reminiscent document of the intoxicating joys and the devastating discouragements of a child born of a dashing, aristocratic Venezuelan father and a strict, Puritanical New England mother. In one galloping incident after another, he portrays the persistent conflict between the two strains in his blood. In the sometimes tragic, often hilarious, always significant adjustments of temperament in this single man, are sketched an allegorical presentation of the adjustments that the two races of the western

hemisphere are facing, and the student can gain insight into the possibilities of Pan-American understanding by studying them. Ybarra developed a well-balanced, vigorous, useful, and definitely international personality. So can the nations that in his blood he represents:

For adventure and plot the book is fascinating. The style sparkles with sly New England wit and with brilliant Latin thrusts. It has rhythm and order, as the work of a first line journalist should have. It is only the life story of a single man; yet the reader feels that Destiny tossed Tom deliberately into the merrily boiling cauldron of Pan-Americanism as an example for the reader, who, himself, is on the verge of becoming an "added ingredient." If one may judge by the example, the experience is going to be not only enduring and profitable but downright fun!

Novels

Among recent Latin volumes for entertainment, the novel stands well to the front. Here are a few titles that have been popular in public libraries:

Beals, Carleton—*The Stones Awake*
 Botsford, Helen—*Ashes of Gold*
 De Sherbinin, Betty—*Wind on the Pampas*
 Duguid, Julian—*Cloak of Monkey Fur*
 Ficke, Arthur—*Mrs. Morton of Mexico*
 Jennings, John—*Call the New World*
 Maass, Edgar—*Don Pedro and the Devil*
 Peters, Eleanor—*Tare Harvest*
 Wellman, Paul—*Angel with Spurs*

Through good fiction the reader catches glimpses of the emotional life of a community or a nation and gains impressions which stand by, perhaps longer than facts do. Such a book, for example, is Thornton Wilder's *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, a "must" book for a teacher who is trying to understand the soul of the Latin American. Probably no book done by an Anglo-American has since

surpassed this volume for sincerity, simplicity, and truthful portrayal.

In more recent, naturalistic vein, with a series of vivid incidents loosely strung together, without beginning or ending, yet leaving one with personalities indelibly etched upon the mind, is the 1943 translation of Erico Verissimo's *Crossroads*, a story of life in Porto Alegrea, capital of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, in southern Brazil, where humanity seems to be quite as colorful, as drab, as conscienceless, as devoted—as in Chicago. Covering only five days in time, the book paints unforgettable portraits of persons, in the Steinbeck vein, although the pattern is reminiscent of Aldous Huxley.

Probably the most significant recent Latin American novel is *Broad and Alien Is the World*, by Ciro Alegria, a volume that was prize winner in the 1941 Latin American Prize Novel Contest. It has been translated into English by Harriet de Onis. Using poetic prose to bring realism to the level of romantic beauty, Alegria presents a picture of life in the Indian community of Rumi, in Peru. The book has plot, yes. A greedy rancher contrives by sheer terrorism, brutality and legal trickery to steal their land from the unschooled Indians. But the plot moves slowly at the start, interrupted by absorbing passages of family and village incident that suggest rather than declare the inherent creed of the Inca—his sense of time, of truth, of morality, of democracy, of justice. There are no long, tedious descriptions as such, but rather a steady undercurrent of descriptive fragment. It is expressed in nature comparisons that leave us never very far from the dignity, the spiritual integrity, and the mysticism that link the Inca to the earth and make him one with plant and rock, with wind and stream.

The human problems covered are as varied as the life of the community. We find the village father, after a visit to the priest had failed to bring wisdom, climbing feebly to the summit of Rumi to listen to the "cosmic conversation" of the mountain, to pour out an offering, and to learn from the echoes the outcome of their trouble. We take into our hearts the Robin Hood of Peru, the old mayor who urges the construction of the school-house in the very face of doom, the worker who seeks a better life in the coca plantations and is destroyed, the bright lad who seeks his fate in the rubber jungle and finds bitter blindness, the shepherd children so mercilessly whipped by the overseers, the young Spanish lawyer who champions the Indians and ruins his career, even battered old Saint Isadore who in his own way insists upon being adopted by the Indians of Rumi.

While the book abounds in psychological interpretation, it seems to neglect specific concrete details. The pictures of the men and women as individuals, the interiors of their homes, items of clothing and food and tools are not elaborated upon—perhaps because they are so familiar to the Peruvian writer that he overlooks them, perhaps because in Inca fashion the spiritual values are held of greater importance than the material. Either way, the Anglo-American reader misses them.

Like the Nazis today, Spanish conquerors have denied these people all education save what they can pass on by word of mouth. From mental prisons they look out upon the roads that go by:

The path entered upon a broader road that ran from north to south, making a streak of lightness against the rising and

falling slopes of the hills, disappearing in the turns to emerge again and finally fade into a pale thread on the violet heights. The road came from distant and unknown regions and villages, and went to regions and villages equally unknown. It exercised a strange disturbing fascination over the villagers.

What the power to be articulate might mean to them is expressed between the lines in many passages.

After the first chapter or two, you, as a reader, find yourself completely embroiled, with the Indians, in a powerful problem of justice, in which sling-shots and machine guns are insignia worn by the rival forces. Yet you hope till the very end that Fate will perform a miracle of some sort and restore happiness to the Inca family that is the community village. All the way, you share deeply with the Indian the benediction of the winds blowing down the barren slopes of the Andes, the sunlight in the meadows and the grainfields, the music in the bird songs and the golden voices of the people—people whose only crime is that they love the land. And you long with old Rosendo to live in peace and to "fill your eyes with horizons."

Such novels as have come to us within the last few years give proof that Latin writers have power. Theorists their politicians may be; but their writers are observing unafraid, and with tenderness and hope, the complex life of which they are a part. As we take advantage of these, together with the better books of travel, history and biography, we shall make progress with one of the teacher's most urgent opportunities and responsibilities—an understanding of the Latin American people who have become our teammates in the development of a new American way of life.

Background Reading on China

C. O. ARNDT

Professor Arndt, on leave from Northwestern University as Far Eastern Specialist of the U. S. Office of Education, has long been an active advocate of international understanding. He was editor of the yearbook, AMERICANS ALL: STUDIES IN INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION. Having lived in China for a period of years, he was able to approach the writing of this article with enthusiasm and insight.

—Editor.

Book selection in any field is fraught with hazards. Recommending desirable books on China to the general reader is no exception. However, the field is not only highly interesting but extraordinarily important today, and the task eminently worth attempting.

Introductory Books

The first selection is not difficult to make. It is Lin Yutang's *My Country and My People*.¹ This truly great book depicts well the mind and character, the customs, literature, art, and social institutions of modern and ancient China, for the author knows the cultural context out of which they grew. Moreover he knows America and the philosophy of the West and is therefore uniquely qualified to act as an interpreter of China to America. But, more important, he is a great writer. His deep sense of humor, his capacity to see subtle relationships, and his smooth, flowing style will delight most readers.

Nathaniel Peffer says of this book: "Let me say at the outset that this is the best book on China in the English language. I recommend it to all who want

¹ John Day, 1939, \$3.00.

a true and sensitively perceived picture of China. I recommend it also for its acute insight into oriental institutions, ideas and ways of life."

Lin Yutang's *The Wisdom of China and India*² is a major publication in terms of size and content. It will delight the anthologist for here are gathered some of the outstanding classics of ancient China and India. Who would not be interested, for example, in reading selections from *The Book of History*, the oldest known piece of writing in Chinese? Its content dates back to the reign of Emperor Yao who ruled from 2357-2256 B.C. Selections from ancient classic and folk poetry, from various types of prose, from the writings of Confucious, Mencius, and the humorist Chuangtse will amaze the reader by their beauty, wit, and profundity. They afford the student abundant opportunity to consult the mainsprings of Chinese thought and civilization, a procedure followed by far too few people in this day of headline hunting.

Madame Chiang Kai-shek's *This is Our China*³ serves not only as an introduction to China but to the character and personality of its author as well. Here she describes the thinking of China in wartime, her faith, and her deep interest in youth. The accounts of her wide travel into various parts of China are addressed to the school children of the former Nanking Orphans' School as well as to the youth of the country generally. In them she sees the hope of the future and she would have this hope well founded.

² Random House, 1942, \$3.95.

³ Harper, 1940, \$3.50.

Another helpful introductory publication is *The Chinese Novel*,⁴ by Pearl Buck. In this lecture, delivered before the Swedish Academy at Stockholm, December 12, 1938, when she was awarded the Nobel Prize, Miss Buck gives an illuminating overview of the history of the Chinese novel. The scholars of China did not recognize it as a legitimate form of art or literature. The novel therefore was able to develop in freedom, much to the delight of the common man with whose life interests it was ever closely associated. *The Chinese Novel* serves as an excellent introduction to the fiction which follows.

Fiction

*All Men Are Brothers (Shui Hu Chuan)*⁵ is best discussed by Pearl Buck herself. She says of it, "Shui Hu Chuan was written by no one man. Out of a handful of tales centering in the Sung dynasty about a band of robbers there grew this great, structural novel. Its beginnings were in history. . . The dynasty under the emperor Huei Chung was falling into decadence and disorder. The rich grew richer and the poor poorer and when none other came forth to set this right these righteous robbers came forth. . .

"This novel has survived everything and in this new day in China has taken on an added significance. The Chinese Communists have printed their own edition of it with a preface by a famous Communist and have issued it anew as the first Communist literature in China. The proof of the novel's greatness is in this timelessness. . . The only figure lacking is that of the modern scholar trained in the west, holding his Ph.D. diploma in his hand. But be sure that if he had been alive in China when the final hand laid

down the brush upon the pages of that book, he too would have been there in all the pathos and humor of his new learning, so often useless and inadequate and laid like a patch too small upon an old robe."⁶

Pearl Buck has ever maintained close contact with the pressing realities (*The Good Earth*)⁷ and changing political scenes of contemporary Chinese life. She has written in season of the warlords (*Sons*),⁸ of communism and Japanese-Chinese relations (*The Patriot*),⁹ and more recently in her great novel *Dragon Seed*¹⁰ of the present war with Japan. In *Dragon Seed* the reader thinks and suffers with the masses of China who are being tortured and blown to bits by such novel inventions of the machine age as the airplane and machine gun. Helpless they appear in the face of such weapons except for their dauntless courage, age-old philosophy, and unshakable desire to live on despite inhuman suffering. Why China continues to fight today against such unequal odds and why she must win eventually becomes apparent to the reader who will follow the book with interest from the first page. The publication of *The Promise*, a sequel to *Dragon Seed*, is being awaited by many.

So long and detailed a novel as Lin Yutang's *Moment in Peking*¹¹ may cause some to by-pass this fascinating story of 20th century Chinese life. Here the intimate life of a Peking family of some means is portrayed with such effectiveness that we soon develop a close attachment to its principal personages. How strong, how uniquely beautiful is the institution

⁶ Pearl Buck, *The Chinese Novel*, Pp. 42-45

⁷ John Day, 1934, \$2.50

⁸ John Day, 1932, \$2.50

⁹ John Day, 1939, \$2.50

¹⁰ John Day, 1942, \$2.50

¹¹ John Day, 1939, \$3.00

⁴ John Day, 1939, \$1.50

⁵ John Day, 1937, \$3.75

of the family which has been operative in China for centuries and continues to function today! Certainly, American life would be immensely enriched if we would learn to know Chinese family life and could adopt from it at least some of its obvious virtues. Our youth, middle age, and certainly our latter years would be happier than they now are.

While not a sequel to *Moment in Peking, A Leaf in the Storm*¹² permits some of its characters to reappear. Through one of the more important characters, Lao Ping, the philosophy of Buddhism is revealed as it functions in situations of daily life. The background of the story is the present Chinese-Japanese war, which is keenly felt throughout this absorbing love story.

The novel *Monkey* by Wu Cheng-en,¹³ has had wide circulation in China for centuries. Essentially, however, it is a story of real human beings told by a writer who well knows their strengths and weaknesses.

Village in August,¹⁴ by Tien Chun is the first novel written in the Chinese vernacular (*Kuo Yu*) to be translated into English. Here soldiers, ill-equipped, fight a relentless battle against the well-armed Japanese. A new and strong feeling of nationalism transforms this group of intensely real soldiers and enables them to fight on against seemingly hopeless odds. It has had a wide circulation in China.

Another recent novel, *The Foreigners*,¹⁵ by Preston Schoyer, describes the life of white people in China. Doctors, missionaries, business men, and a school teacher appear in this story and afford insight into the manner of life which is lived by

them in Oriental China. The author's faith in China is unshaken despite the devastation wrought by the Japanese. He too believes that China will rise again and he bases his faith upon the qualities of earthiness, sense of humor, and patience of its people. It is a long novel, written with considerable detail.

An historical novel of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century which describes the struggle between Americans and Europeans for the trade of China is *China Trader*, by Cornelia Spencer.¹⁶ It serves to illustrate the procedures used by forces which thought above all of financial returns, whether through opium traffic or milder media of trade. The principal characters are white, not Chinese.

Two stories which boys and girls between the ages of 12 - 15 will enjoy are *Young Fu on the Upper Yantze*¹⁷ and *Ho Ming, Girl of New China*,¹⁸ by Elizabeth Lewis. The former is a book for boys, the latter for girls. Both give authentic pictures of Chinese youth before the present war. While these books were written primarily for adolescents, they will be enjoyed by teachers and other adults as well. The author writes sympathetically and interestingly.

Biography

Emily Hahn knows the Soong sisters through direct and personal association with them. This explains in part why her sketches of each are so well drawn and complete in *The Soong Sisters*.¹⁹ Traditionally strong family ties exist between the sisters, though this fact is not made apparent through outward manifestations. In fact, the interests and phil-

¹² John Day, 1941, \$2.50

¹³ John Day, 1943, \$2.75

¹⁴ Smith and Durrell, 1942, \$2.50

¹⁵ Dodd, Mead, 1942, \$2.50

¹⁶ John Day, 1940, \$2.50

¹⁷ Winston, 1932, \$2.00

¹⁸ Winston, 1934, \$2.00

¹⁹ Doubleday, Doran, 1942, \$3.00.

osophy of life of each sister are so diverse as to arouse attention. It is their unquestioned love of and devotion to the welfare of China that has endeared them to the masses. The people know of it through ever new evidence or, better, through their daily living. Diverse though it may be for each of the three sisters, it is ever sincere and courageous.

*My Father in China*²⁰ is the life story of William Burke, a missionary who spent fifty years in China. The value of this interesting biography is enhanced by the fact that the author sketches the life of his father against the evolving history of China during the 20th century. The Boxer Rebellion, the exit of the Manchus, and the birth and development of the Republic are thus given a continuity and human interest which are not found in history books.

One of the best written and most interesting books of those here reviewed is *Destination Chungking*.²¹ Its appeal is enhanced by the fact that the author is a young Chinese woman who while writing about the present war does not seek out the spectacular but pictures rather the life of families in their homes under war conditions. The institution of the family, the role of friends, and friends' friends even in wartime China are depicted in a most effective way. This way of life, so essentially democratic, did not come about suddenly nor can it soon vanish.

Adet and Anor Lin, daughters of Lin Yutang, are the translators of *Girl Rebel*,²² an autobiography of Hsieh Pingying. The thoughts and experiences of this girl from childhood days at home, later days at school and finally service at the front in the present war depict the move toward

a new emancipation of women in China today. Ever a rebel, this girl achieves real satisfaction and happiness in life only when she becomes actively engaged in war service for her country. There are a few places at which the comment drags, but only a few.

Another biography of a young Chinese woman which describes the emergence from parental control through the influence of higher education is found in *I've Come a Long Way*.²³ The problems which confront the youth of China today are great and varied but they are not beyond solution for such young people as Helena Kuo, the sensitive and poetic writer of this book.

History and Politics

Kenneth S. Latourette's *The Development of China*²⁴ was written for people who want a concise overview of Chinese history. Dates and names are used sparingly to facilitate the discussion of larger movements. It is an interesting and informative book which teachers will find very valuable.

In *Is China a Democracy*?²⁵ Creighton Lacy discusses the question raised by its title through a quick overview of the past, a consideration of the present, and a forecast of the future. The language used is non-technical, the style fast moving. If judged only by political standards which are operative in this country then China is not a democracy. It is ruled by a one party system, the Kuomintang, and it has not yet adopted a constitution. But these standards of judgment are fallacious, the author points out, since they are merely external and imply the existence of an absolute. If we think of democracy as a way of life in which the rights of the in-

²⁰ Farrar and Rinehart, 1942, \$3.00

²¹ Little Brown, 1942, \$3.00.

²² John Day, 1940, \$2.00.

²³ Appleton-Century, 1943, \$3.00.

²⁴ Houghton Mifflin, 1937.

²⁵ John Day, 1943, \$1.50

dividual are considered sacred and in which this belief finds wide implementation, then China is truly a democracy and one of the world's oldest.

In *The China of Chiang Kai-shek*,²⁶ Paul M. Linebarger gives us an analysis of the political problems which face China today. Political parties, especially the Kuomintang and the Communist organizations, are discussed. Valuable information about guerilla warfare, Chinese Industrial Cooperatives, and the Mass Education Movement is also given. Several important government documents, among them the Proposed Constitution and Documents on Party Politics, further help to make this volume invaluable to the student who would understand contemporary China.

For those who wish to meet the personalities who have directed the affairs of China during the last two decades *News is My Job*²⁷ is recommended. Edna Booker, a journalist, set out to meet China's leaders and meet them she did. She writes in the fast moving style of a reporter. There are few dull moments in the book.

Miscellaneous Books

Shake Hands with the Dragon, by Carl Glick,²⁸ is a popularly written, highly interesting series of short stories about Chinese life in America. Included in it are stories of home and business life, holidays and festivals, tongs, and secret societies. The important rôle played by Chinese-Americans in promoting the

establishment of a republic for China are interestingly told. The keen sense of humor of the writer enables him to interpret subtleties which would escape the attention of many writers.

An "easy to read" and interesting travel book is *Into China*, by Eileen Bigland.²⁹ Through it the reader will gain insight into many aspects, of the daily life of the common people of China. Family life, opium smoking, the Burma Road, and the bombing of Chung-king are but a few of the topics which are discussed. It is a good travel book.

The structure and flavor of the original are well preserved in the translation of *Lady Precious Stream*, by S. I. Hsiung.³⁰ Because of their novelty and uniqueness the stage technique and dramatic procedure employed in this play will delight the reader.

Chinese poems on a large variety of topics are well translated by Arthur Waley in *The Book of Songs*.³¹ Poetry as a medium for developing understanding between peoples of diverse cultures has not thus far been widely explored in American public schools. Its potentialities are great, for in poetry a view of life or some aspect of it is given in succinct and artistic form. The student gains direct access to original source material and is not dependent upon hearsay. How much, for example, may be learned about marriage customs and dynastic legends from the poems on p. 66 ff. and 239 ff. of *The Book of Songs*!

²⁶ World Peace Foundation (Boston), 1941, \$2.50.

²⁷ Macmillan, 1941.

²⁸ McGraw-Hill, 1941.

²⁹ Macmillan, 1942.

³⁰ Liveright, 1935, \$2.00.

³¹ Houghton, Mifflin, 1937, \$3.00.

Let's Say It Together

MARCELLA MASON¹

Corpus Christi, Texas, Public Schools

CHORAL SPEAKING has, for a number of years, gained much popularity as a means of group expression. The elementary school has found it valuable esthetically for the pleasure children themselves find in it. It is a means of speech improvement for the children's own vocal training in stabilizing their voices, eliminating nervous jerkiness in speaking, and strengthening lazy speech muscles. In the middle and upper grades particularly it has been favored as a literature activity and as an outgrowth of the social studies. Verse speaking is often shared with other children in the room or given in assemblies before a larger audience.

Elements Of Satisfaction

The thing that always comes first is the children's interest in the selection itself, their understanding, appreciation, and thorough enjoyment of it. Middle grades revel in the bravado of the swashbuckling, daring Pirate Don Durk and in the despairing antics of Jonathan Bing, while the upper graders clamor with gusto for the mighty Casey at his bat or for William Rose Benet's thunderous "Jesse James."

Factors that are secondary but none the less important in the selection include repetition, rhythm, picture effects, preferably some animation, and a message or story interwoven. To repetition goes much of the credit for effectiveness when it is given by the group and they come eagerly upon the familiar words while the listeners, too, smile knowingly to

¹ A teacher in the Corpus Christi, Texas, Public Schools.

hear the lines again. Repetition may come by way of repeated words as in the reappearance of the roundabouts in Milne's "Busy" or it may come in phrases or lines. Often entire stanzas are repeated as is true in "Johnny at the Fair" and this adapts itself readily to chorus work. Rhythm occurs in all poetry but is especially evident in ballads. It may be the lilting "Hi-ho, hi-ho, hi-ho" or the dolorous wail of the fellow who was starving to death on his government claim. Rhythm must be considered carefully and given attention in practices to avoid a sing-song or monotonous effect. Words or phrases that possess onomatopoeia are good for their vividness, e.g. *mumble*, *strumming*, *gallop*, and *murmuring*.

Group expression may easily be brought out where there is animation as in Milne's "Puppy and I," Anna Pratt's "A Mortifying Mistake," Edward Lear's "The Owl and the Pussy Cat" and "The Table and the Chair," Florence Jaques' "There Once Was A Puffing," and Clement Moore's "A Visit from St. Nicholas." Since most of these suggested are humorous it does not mean that humor has to be a part of the poetry or prose chosen, for interest and understanding also occur where there is seriousness and deep feeling. Some of this type for older boys and girls are Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg, Walt Whitman's "I Hear America Singing," and John Masefield's "Sea Fever," while the loveliness and charm of the "Chinese Lullaby," Eugene Field's "Wynken, Blynken, and Nod," and Rose Fyleman's "A Fairy Went A-Marketing" make them popular with younger chil-

dren. We shall have to admit that children are more appreciative of the beautiful than we give them credit for being.

As to the story element, ballads again come to the fore with their tales of cowboys, homesteading, lumbering, pioneers, the sea, and the plantation, but story interest appears in many other poems as well. Since verse speaking is often used in relation to the social studies, some upper graders found the Western Movement depicted in James Marshall's "The Oregon Trail: 1851" and in Henry Knibbs' "The Long Road West" excellent to give in an assembly as part of their culminating activity for that unit.

Whatever the essentials of the selection it should be one that the group has liked so well that they want to read it together and wish to share with others. Much of the material may be used as it is but in many instances the teacher and children will find it better to cut out parts and occasionally make substitutions in vocabulary.

Gradual Development Of The Program

Often teachers are so anxious to work up a choral speaking group that they plunge the children immediately into a selection and expect results. Children have to be trained, to be led up to this responsibility by working on choral responses in a simple manner. In the beginning they may read a few lines or a stanza in unison or divide a number into thought phrases for group speech as in the well-known "Where have you been" lines about Billy-boy. Corrections and suggestions for improvement are made and practiced until both individuals and the group have grown in confidence, and an understanding of speaking together, as well as in ability in speech control.

From practices of this type the group

will be able to proceed with a selection of two or three stanzas. A good working group is composed of approximately twelve to twenty children. Voices may be sorted in the upper grades (or where there is enough difference in voices to justify it) to find the heavy and light tones and those are placed together. Each child has a copy and the poem is learned together by the whole method. During the memorization correct pronunciation, enunciation, and distinct articulation should be checked immediately whenever and wherever there is a need before the incorrect form becomes a habit or is acquired by the others.

Variations in tone, phrasing, the number who speak at a time, the speed, gestures, and sound effects may be suggested by both teacher and children and tried to see if they are pleasing. Much expression can be conveyed by the voice and almost always has to be experimented with to find where and what tones are most satisfying. Sometimes a light tone is desirable and a low response for contrast, or it may be that the entire group begins low and proceeds with increased volume to an effective crescendo and again where the mood is a merry one the tones would all be light. Where the mood is one of sadness or horror, the tones would be heavy.

Some word groups belong together naturally and should be said together while the separation of others by pausing makes for better phrasing. The number of speakers for various parts will vary according to the effect desired, hence the solo, small group and chorus parts should be decided as seem necessary. Sometimes a narrator gives a prologue or the descriptive parts. Three girls with soprano voices may be lost children, one boy with a deep voice may say the giant's lines,

several heavy voices may portray the storm, or one tone group may give a phrase, and another pick it up immediately and carry it as far as seems necessary. The tempo adds greatly to the expression by saying the words quickly to indicate fast movement, or the lines may be drawled to produce the opposite impression. Extremes of rate are often needed in the same selection. Timing functions also in all group beginnings and endings, for all lines whether by two children or the entire group must be given with exact precision, and breathing must likewise be done at the same times. Group unity should be heard in the presentation as in a singing choir with all voices blended as one. Whenever the group speaks no single voice should stand out above the others.

Auxiliary Effects

For elementary children the movements, if any are used, should be few and simple in order not to jeopardize breathing and articulation. A few gestures with hands and arms would add to the interest in Beatrice Brown's "Jonathan Bing" and would also help distinguish the grandiose

Pirate Don Durk of Dowdee in Mildred Meig's poem of that name. A shaking of heads and pointing of fingers would establish the disapproval of the crowd in Ernest Thayer's "Casey at the Bat." Markings should always be made on the director's copy whenever changes are made in the speech, timing, movements, or numbers participating so that practices are according to the changes made. Occasionally effects are created by humming, the thumping of a drum, or some such sound made to help convey the mood of a certain part. Seldom would the accompaniment continue throughout the presentation as it would become monotonous to the audience and detract from the speech of the group. Sometimes lighting effects help. No stage settings or costumes are needed, but if used, they too should be simple. Train the group well so the story of the selection is interpreted, and do no directing before them as it is given. The interest of elementary children should not be spoiled by over-practice; their own joy and delight should be evident for their own pleasure in it is its real excuse for being.

The Educational Scene

CONFERENCES ON EDUCATION AND THE WAR

Workshops and conferences on education in wartime for supervisors and teachers in service will be conducted by numerous colleges and universities this summer. Among these, at least two will deal specifically with the problems of reading instruction at the elementary and secondary school levels.

The Sixth Annual Conference on Reading at the University of Chicago will be held in Mandel Hall, beginning Monday afternoon, July 12, and extending through Friday, July 16, 1943. The central theme of the conference will be "Adjusting Reading Programs to Wartime Needs." The program will deal both with challenging issues relating to reading that arise directly out of the war emergency and also with other significant reading problems that teachers and school officers are encountering today. Because of the large number of topics that should be considered this summer, the conference has been planned even more elaborately than during previous years and will continue for a half-day longer.

General sessions will be held each afternoon, when the problems that will be discussed in detail in sectional meetings will be considered before the conference as a whole. Sectional meetings will be conducted each morning and during the latter part of most afternoons. These meetings will pertain specifically to the interests of three groups, namely, primary-grade teachers, middle-grade teachers, and high-school and junior-college teachers. The speakers will include

national leaders in the field of reading as well as staff members at the University of Chicago. Vigorous effort is being made to develop a program of maximum value in clarifying thinking concerning many challenging issues relating to reading today and in providing as much practical help as possible in solving them.

The following will be some of the topics and speakers on the conference program: "Wartime Interests and Needs and Their Relation to Reading Programs," Ralph W. Tyler, Department of Education, University of Chicago; "Guidance of Children in Wartime, with Special Reference to Reading," Ethel Kavin, Counselor in Guidance, Public Schools of Glencoe and Western Springs, Illinois; "Reading Materials That Provide Needed Curriculum Enrichment," Manley E. Irwin, Supervising Director, Division of Instruction, Public Schools, Detroit, Michigan; "Recreational Reading That Aids in Adjusting Pupils," Bernice E. Leary, Department of Curriculum, Public Schools, Madison, Wisconsin, and many others.

Another conference, or "reading clinic," will be conducted by the School of Education of the Pennsylvania State College, State College, Pennsylvania, under the direction of Professor Emmett A. Betts. The topics of the seminar, which will extend from August 9 through August 13, will be: "Basic Notions Regarding Reading Instruction," "Bases for Effective Reading Instruction," "Techniques for Estimating Needs," "Differentiation of Instruction within the Classroom," and "Levels of Differentiation within the Classroom."

Review and Criticism

AN AUTHOR REPLIES

Certain statements in Mr. Herrick's review of my book, *Glimpses Into Child Life*, suggest that his reading of this 442 page volume was hasty. That may perhaps partly explain his misinterpretation of the purpose and contents of the book. The author's purpose was to present, in simple terms, for the average parent, concrete information concerning the twelve-year-old child in the home, school, and community. She gained this information through training, research, and experience with children and parents.

In order to impress upon the reader the fact that we do not know all the answers the author has called the book, *Glimpses Into Child Life*. Mr. Herrick charges that "the parent is never left in doubt as to the right method for solving the problems of children." But the author specifically states, "There is still a tremendous amount to be learned before we can look into the deep recesses of the child's mind; before we can understand his feelings, his motives, and his conduct. . . . The experience and knowledge we have so far attained is not sufficient to 'lead our paths aright'" (p. viii).

Mr. Herrick speaks of "the apparent dependence upon rather superficial inventories for practically all the material reported and interpreted to parents." Compare this with the author's statement, "No claim is made that these tests will tell us all there is to know about child life. The intricate pattern of the human mind and human behavior have been the intriguing puzzles of the ages and are not so easily solved. . . . Every child is unique

in his make-up so we expect children to differ in their responses." (Pp. viii-ix).

Mr. Herrick asks, "Are twelve-year-olds different from eleven-year-olds? Is this a special age? Should parents be forewarned and prepared for this period?" The author says, "Children do not change as abruptly as we have been led to believe. If there is understanding between the parent and the twelve-year-old child now there will be understanding between them later. The main reason difficulties often arise at the adolescent period is that the child, growing into manhood, is strong enough to fight back against things he did not like when he was smaller but which he had to accept then because he was more helpless" (p. ix).

To reassure Mr. Herrick that the tests are not "superficial inventories," we wish to inform him that the materials of the book are based on careful statistical analysis. Most of the tests grew out of the author's master's and doctor's theses. Much of the same material, in more academic form, appeared in a number of technical and professional magazines.

The basic misunderstanding probably is that Mr. Herrick has evaluated the book as a text-book for college students. Too many such books, together with valuable theses and other research studies, are gathering dust in libraries, while the average parent lacks guidance in solving every-day problems of the normal child. The author's purpose was to make scientific materials available to parents without burdening them with technical procedures.

ROSE ZELIGS,
Cincinnati, Ohio

—AND THE REVIEWER RESPONDS

I applaud Miss Zeligs' purpose for writing her book and her good judgment in recognizing the need for books which will not gather dust but which will bring valuable material to parents to aid them in understanding and offering guidance to their children.

I do not believe, however, that statements in the "Introduction" have much

value unless their import is reflected in the body of the book. Rather than being the result of the suggested "hasty" examination of the 442 page volume, my review attempted to give my judgment as to the value of the content to help *parents* and to meet the aims suggested by Miss Zeligs herself.

VIRGIL E. HERRICK,
University of Chicago

FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

The brief reviews in this issue are by Jean Gardiner Smith, Pearl Drubeck, Frances Horwich, and Bernardine Schmidt. The unsigned annotations are by the editor.

Wings Around the World: Aviation Books for Boys and Girls. Prepared by the Children's Books Committee of the Madison Public Schools, Madison, Wisconsin, 1943. Five cents.

An attractively printed leaflet listing aviation books for boys and girls and providing publication facts, as well as brief descriptions of the contents.

Against All Odds. By Marion F. Lansing. Illustrated by William Sharp. Doubleday, \$2.00

The story of the great pioneers and liberators of South America—San Martin, Bolivar, O'Higgins, Father Fritz, Wheelwright, and many others. These are the heroes of liberty of our neighbors to the South, leaders in their Wars of Independence who should share with Washington and Jefferson in the admiration of young Americans everywhere. For upper grade boys and girls.

Cbico of the Andes. By Christine von Hagen. Illustrated by Zhenya Gay. Nelson, \$2.00

Fast-moving narrative for eight-to-twelve-year olds, set high in the Andes of Ecuador. Rapidly shifting scenes of farm and city and mountain and the stories of the ancient Incas woven into the plot combine to give charm and power to this tale of a South American lad.

Listen Hitler! The Gremlins Are Coming. By Inez Hogan. Dutton, \$1.00

The Gremlins first bedeviled the R.A.F. fighters by fogging the windshields, deflecting

shells from the guns, tampering with compasses; then annoyed the WAACS by rubbing the powder off their noses and causing runs in their stockings. But the big news came when they planned their mass invasion of Germany, Italy, and Japan. Profusely and amusingly illustrated.

Your Career in Chemistry. By Norman V. Carlisle. Dutton, \$2.50

A left-handed Negro worker made a slightly different cut in a pine tree from which turpentine was being extracted, and a field chemist made an amazing discovery. He found that the tree did not store turpentine, but manufactured it to protect the inner bark when it was wounded. This historical event, along with the magic stories of lucite, vitamins, and chemical warfare, Norman Carlisle recounts in his new career book which follows his *Your Career in Engineering*, *Your Career in Transportation*, and others.

P. D.

Paderewski. By Antoni Gronowicz. Translated by Jessie McEwen. Nelson, \$2.50

The story of Paderewski's life of musical greatness, of his undying love for his native land, and of his personal tragedies, told sympathetically by a friend who loved him devotedly. Beginning with the mistreatment of Paderewski's father by Czarist soldiers, through the early death of his lovely wife and the illness of his only son, to the deliverance of Poland and Paderewski's brief career as Premier of the new republic, the sorrows

that beset the great artist were manifold. Paderewski was totally unfit for his role as a statesman but he never ceased fighting for Poland's freedom, and his last great sorrow was the enslavement of his country by the Nazis just before his death in 1941. P. D.

The Star Spangled Banner. Pictured by Ingri and Edgar Parin d'Aulaire. Doubleday, \$2.00

That the d'Aulaires can interpret American life to American children has been proved by their *Abraham Lincoln*. It is the more disappointing, then, to have from their hands such illustrations as these. Throughout the book, one feels the effort to create a picture suited to the words and within the comprehension of children. If the national anthem must be illustrated, it would seem better to let each child find for himself the deeper significance which it holds. That red and white clouds with a patch of starred blue sky must be resorted to in a picture which is already cluttered with images, is surely an undue straining for patriotism. A less expensive book with fewer illustrations would have been preferable. It should also be noted that only the melody is given for the music and that is on the end papers and would be lost in re-binding. J. G. S.

Nursery Nights. By Katharine Haviland-Taylor. Pictures by Decie Merwin. Lippincott, \$1.50

The toys in Winky's nursery chatter and play happily in the Doll's House after the family has gone to bed. The Jack-in-the-box, the Belgian doll, the Tin Soldier, even the elephant on the mantel and the iron dog door-stop discourse about Winky and their own adventures. Appropriately illustrated.

Our Oldest Friends. By Irmengarde Eberle. Illustrated by Marguerite Kirmse. Holiday House, 1942. \$2.00

The dog, the horse, and the cat are the three oldest friends of man. Their gradual development from prehistoric times to the present and their place in man's life are the subject matter of the book. The many anecdotes included are well chosen and serve the purpose of actually adding to the text and not just padding it as is so often the case. An excellent book of informational material for the young person who is interested in any one of these animals. Grades 5-8. J. G. S.

The House Between. By Ethel Parton. Viking, \$2.00

Newburyport was a sailing and ship-building town of the 1850's, when the gold rush in California quickened life and activity all across the country to the Atlantic coast. Ethel Parton's characters in this story—Cassy, Flora and Fidelia, Derry, Elly and Trueworthy—are lively and wholly delightful children who explore, adventure, and get into mischief in nineteenth century clothes and language, but manage to be convincing because they are so like curious, healthy young boys and girls today. Miss Parton's series of Newburyport stories are an excellent modern version of the *Five Little Peppers*, and in addition provide a background of good American for young readers. P. D.

Little Navajo Bluebird. By Ann Nolan Clark.

Illustrations by Paul Lantz. Viking, \$2.00

Little Doli is a modern Navajo Indian girl who loves her adobe home where her father fashions beautiful ornaments of silver and turquoise, her mother weaves mystic patterns into rugs, and her older sister and brother tend the herds of sheep. She fears the White Man into whose world her brother goes and does not return. This is the story of the bitterness in the hearts of a proud race whose happiness is threatened by strange intruders, and who must learn through heartbreak and struggle that the Indian can benefit by the contributions the White Man makes to his well-being, without denying his own great heritage. P. D.

The Fairies of the Glen. By Anges Fisher. Illustrated by Zhenya Gay. Thomas Nelson, \$1.50

The story of Tiny and the fairy queen and the momentous twilight council at which it was decided to accompany the "human creatures" across the stormy ocean to America. Charming told, and attractively illustrated in color. For children of all ages.

Pito's House. By Catherine Bryan and Mabra Madden. Macmillan, \$1.50

In this Mexican folk tale, it was the good padre who knew how to solve Pito's problem. Pito's house seemed quite comfortable indeed after the livestock made its departure. For children from six to ten.

The Sun and the Wind and Mr. Todd. By Eleanor Estes and Louis Slobodkin. Harcourt, \$2.00

The author and illustrator of *The Moffats* and *The Middle Moffat* rescue the Traveller of Aesop's fable from oblivion. Children from six to twelve will relish not only the excitement and humor of the tale but also the hilariously effective drawings.

Pepita Bonita. By Alan Crane. Nelson, \$1.50

A two-color picture book for children of four and older, with an exciting story about Pepita, the pelican, and the Mexican boy who bandaged its broken wing.

Nathan's Dark House. By Florence Bourgeois.

Illustrated by Ninon MacKnight. Double-day, \$1.50

New Jersey in 1750 is the setting for the story of a boy who longed to have glass windows in his home. Nathan tried to earn money by hollowing calabashes into dippers, ladles, bottles, and bowls; but he returned home with all of them save the one he gave away. Then he gathered candleberries and took them to the storekeeper where he had to barter them for a loaf of sugar. When he sold his cranberry preserves to some sailors, he felt he really had begun to save for the glass windows; but his mother put the money away for him. At last, his quickness in beating out a forest fire won for him the windows which changed Nathan's dark house into a light one even on rainy days. Although the story is slight, it pictures life in colonial days; the illustrations both in color and black and white add materially to the text. Grades 4-6.

J. G. S.

Twig. By Elizabeth Orton Jones. Macmillan, \$2.00

An altogether enchanting story about a little girl named Twig who found a house exactly right for a fairy—an empty tin can with bright red tomatoes all around it; and where somebody's can opener had made a mistake, there was a place for a door. Twig turned the can upside down beside the dandelion in her backyard and wished and waited. . . One day a little brown elf with a potato skin jacket moved in. Then Elf magicked Twig into a tiny person just the right size to live in a tomato can house with a thimble table and toothpaste tops for dishes—just the right size to stretch out on a dandelion leaf or to ride on Mrs. Sparrow's back. This is a book for every child who knows that fairies are to be found even in the busy cities of today. So

deftly are reality and make-believe interwoven that when we return to the everyday world, it is to know that "even a little star, no bigger than a toothpaste top, made a difference—a little star, twinkling all by itself, made a difference in the whole sky."

Grades 3-5. To be read aloud to younger children.

J. G. S.

A Book of Myths: Selections from Bulfinch's Age of Fable, with illustrations. By Helen Sewell. Macmillan, \$2.00

Thirty of the myths from *The Age of Fable* have been selected for this new edition. Among those included are: Phaeton, Midas, Baucis and Philemon, Proserpine, Cupid and Psyche, Echo and Narcissus, Perseus and the Chimaera, Hercules, Theseus, and Orpheus and Eurydice. The text is exactly the same as that used in the Bulfinch version. The value of the edition will be in the selection of a few of the myths, and in the format. The illustrations are highly stylized, keeping the quality of Greek design in both the lithographs and the line drawings. Grades 7-9.

J. G. S.

Sigurdur in Iceland. By Alida Visscher Shinn. McKay, 50c

With the scant amount of information available on Iceland, this book will have a place in the collection of books on that country. Unfortunately the information instead of being presented in a direct fashion is within the frame of the visit of an American boy to Iceland. The result is a stilted style which so often occurs when this is done. Such bits of information as "only one-eighth of an iceberg shows above water" add little to Iceland though they may add seven-eighths to the icebergs. The photographic illustrations are quite modern and show various phases of the life in Iceland. The book is inexpensive and will be worth purchasing if material is needed in this field. Grades 4-6.

J. G. S.

Hurdy-Gurdy Holiday. Story by Leah Gale. Lithographs by Barbara Latham. Harper, \$2.00

The charming story of the man with the hand organ and his monkey brings to children one thrill after the other. The very colorful illustrations attractively depict the characteristics of various culture groups. For children in the early elementary school.

F. R. H.

A Book of Battles from Troy to Bataan. Written and illustrated by Barry Bart. Garden City, \$1.00

There would seem to be no particular *raison d'être* for this book. The sixteen famous battles are garishly pictured. The illustrations are badly cluttered, even granting that they depict battlefields; and they are surprisingly lacking in vigor and action. The information will be available in encyclopedias, except for the Battle of Moscow and of Bataan. Not a *must have* for any book collection. Grades 6-8.

J. G. S.

My Room is My Hobby. By Marion Downer. Lathrop, Lee and Shepard, \$1.75

A most unusual book for young girls especially, showing tricks of the needle, simple carpentry work, and delightful ways to use color. Shifting arrangements of furniture, making and hanging drapes, slip covers, and floor coverings are all given their due emphasis. Illustrations supplement the running text for the beginning interior decorator.

B. G. S.

Out of Doors in Summer. By C. J. Hylander. Macmillan, \$1.50

The story of leaves and why they are green; the differences between kinds of leaves; the most common of the summer mammals of the woods and fields, the trees, and the water; and flowers and birds of the warm summer months, told for children of fourth grade reading ability and better.

B. G. S.

American Dolls in Uniform. By Nina R. Jordan. Harcourt, \$2.00

Especially appropriate at this time is this book on how to make dolls and dress them in the uniforms of military and civilian service. Directions and diagrams are given for making the dolls, and for outfitting them as soldiers, sailors, airmen, policemen, engineers, and such colorful civilian figures as the lumberjack, the clown, and the balloon man. The vocabulary and general structure of the book is adaptable for all readers from upper primary levels. It should prove desirable for home and school libraries, for craft clubs, and as a handy reference book for class-room activities.

B. G. S.

Little Magic Horse. By Peter Ershoff. Translated from the Russian by Tatiana Balkoff Drowne. Illustrated by Vera Bock. Macmillan, \$2.50

The English translation of the Russian "Konek-Gorbunok", a children's classical folk tale originally written in 1835. It is the story of foolish John, who surprises all by catching a white mare, the marauder of his father's wheat fields. The three wonderful colts borne of this white mare bring John to the fair, where the two splendid horses are sold to the Czar, but the humpbacked homely one he keeps for himself. It is this third colt, "the little magic horse," which carries Johnny through his wonderland and finally wins him the hand of the princess.

The story is told in forceful but simple verse with the color of all Russian tales. Its beautiful illustrations accent its spirit of fantasy. Children of middle grades can enjoy it independently, and even those younger will delight in listening to its smooth rhythm.

B. G. S.

Open Daily. By Aldarilla S. Beistle. Illustrated by Mary Alice Beistle. David McKay, Philadelphia, \$2.00

Mr. Snicklefrits and Spike, his young son, kept the zoo "open daily" in Juniper Junction, despite their need of an "angel" to provide the financial help necessary to make the zoo meet Pop's dreams. How the angel appeared in the person of a twin brother to the town's leading millionaire, who arrived incognito and impersonated his brother to the latter's embarrassment and bewilderment presents a plot of interest to all through the intermediate grades. Its simple style, its easy vocabulary and sentence structure make it suitable reading for children at and above the upper primary achievement level.

B. G. S.

Petey. By Lerida Jackson. Illustrated by Dorothy Buck. Harcourt, \$1.50

Petey, tired of playing in his pen, devises many ways of getting his mother's attention. Efforts at discipline by the "powers that be" will recall to young children their own infantile behavior and lead them to laugh at themselves. The life-like illustrations reflect Petey's changing moods.

F. R. H.

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